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Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden Celebrates Tenth Anniversary as a Bishop



STOCKHOLM – His Eminence Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden and All Scandinavia celebrated his tenth anniversary at the helm of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's eparchy in Scandinavia and consecration to the episcopacy during a series of events from May 24-26, 2024.

On Friday, May 24, 2024, Metropolitan Cleopas welcomed the Director General of the Church of Greece's missionary arm and publishing house Apostoliki Diakonia His Excellency Metropolitan Agathangelos of Fanarion at Arlanda International Airport in Stockholm, together with his associates the Very Rev. Archimandrites Frs. Dositheos and Cornelius.

That same afternoon, Metropolitan Cleopas welcomed His Eminence Metropolitan Athenagoras of Kydonies at the same airport. Metropolitan Athenagoras made the trip to convey the paternal wishes of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew on this auspicious occasion, as well as his own personal congratulations.
Metropolitan Cleopas subsequently hosted a dinner in honor of the visiting hierarchs and their aides at a local area restaurant.

On Saturday morning, May 25, 2024, Metropolitan Cleopas took his guests on a tour of the city. A luncheon was subsequently offered in their honor, courtesy of local businessman Mr. Aydin Melkemichel.

On Saturday afternoon, the Metropolitan hosted a dinner in honor of the visiting clergymen, courtesy of local businessman Mr. George Tzanis, at the newly renovated fellowship hall of the St. George Cathedral in Stockholm, as well as in honor of the Metropolis volunteers, where he addressed all the guests in attendance. Greetings were also offered by the Metropolitans of Kydonies and Fanarion.

On Sunday morning, May 26, 2024, an archieratical concelebration of the Divine Liturgy took place at the St. George Cathedral in Stockholm presided over by the Metropolis' archpastor Metropolitan Cleopas, with Metropolitans Athenagoras and Agathangelos concelebrating along with him, assisted by the visiting clergymen Archimandrites Dositheos and Cornelius, along with local Metropolis clergymen Archimandrite Bartholomew Iatrides and Presbyter George Arvanitidis.

The chanters were led by the Rev. Protopresbyter Fr. Demetrios Demosthenous, Presiding Priest of the St. Barnabas the Apostle Cathedral in Nicosia, who traveled from Cyprus to participate in the celebrations. He was aided by Dr. George Sidiras, Mr. Miltos Soultanis, Dr. John Rigopoulos, Mr. Panagiotis Demosthenous, and Mdmes Iliana Antoniou and Joanna Demosthenous.

At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, the Very Rev. Archimandrite Fr. Bartholomew Iatridis, Parish Priest of the Stockholm Cathedral, addressed Metropolitan Cleopas on behalf of the Metropolis clergy, parish councils, and youth, and offered him a bishop's medallion to commemorate this anniversary.

Metropolitan Athenagoras of Kydonies subsequently addressed Metropolitan Cleopas, conveying congratulatory paternal wishes on behalf of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and offering him a bishop's medallion from the Patriarch as a gift.

Metropolitan Agathangelos of Fanarion, Director General of the Apostoliki Diakonia of the Church of Greece, then presented Metropolitan Cleopas' latest study, which is dedicated to the ever-memorable Archimandrite Eusevios Vittis, who served as a missionary in Scandinavia. The work is entitled "The Missionary Ministry of Archimandrite Eusevios Vittis in Scandinavia 1965-1980." It is currently available in Greek and its publication was made possible by the Apostoliki Diakonia. Metropolitan Agathangelos also expressed his personal love, appreciation, and support for Metropolitan Cleopas' missionary work in the Northern Lands.

Also in attendance at the aforementioned celebrations were the Nuncio of the Holy See H.E. Archbishop Julio Murat, who was accompanied by the Rev. Dominico Vitono, the Syrian-Aramean Archbishop H.E. Benjamin Atas, who was accompanied by his fellow Syrian-Aramean Archbishop Johanoun Lahbo, His Grace Bishop Macarie of the Romanian Orthodox Church in Scandinavia, the V. Rev. Archimandrite Fr. Antonios El Bitar, Vicar of the Patriarchate of Antioch, Her Excellency the Ambassador of Greece to Sweden Ms. Ekaterini Fountoulaki, His Excellency the Ambassador of Cyprus to Sweden Mr. Solon Savva, representatives of the Swedish State Organization SST Mr. Isak Reichel and Dr. Åsa E. Hole, Metropolis legal advisers Messrs. Rafail Poumeyrau and Fredrik Styrlander, Metropolis Executive Board Members Mrs. Kyriaki Papadopoulou Samuelsen and Dr. Nikolaos Venizelos, entrepreneurs Aydin and Louisa Melkimichel, Mayk and Betarice Asmar, Dr. Konstantinos Psimopoulos of Harvard University in Boston, Secretary of the Christian Council of Sweden Ms. Sofia Camnerin, Presvytera Maria Demosthenous of Cyprus and her children Joanna and Panagiotis, the head chanter of the St. Nicholas Finnish Parish in Stockholm Mr. Jukka Aminoff, and a large number of parishioners.

The Divine Liturgy was streamed live on Holy Metropolis of Sweden's official Facebook page thanks to the technical oversight of Mr. Nikolaos Kitsios.

A reception followed, courtesy of the families of Benedict and Tania Svedberg, Olga, Kyriaki, Athena, and Symela Karapanagiotidou, Dr. John and Ekaterini Rigopoulos, Alexandra Zorpidou, Ioanna Skondra, Georgia Gitzia and Chrysoula Kokineli, along with a celebratory luncheon at the Stockholm Cathedral fellowship hall, which was graciously offered by the owners of the Cypern Restaurant in

Stockholm Messrs. Nikos Athanasiou and Sakis Kalpakas.

That same afternoon, Syrian-Aramean Archbishop Benjamin Atas held a reception in honor of Metropolitan Cleopas, the visiting hierarchs, and their entourage. Archbishop Benjamin was joined by his fellow Syrian-Aramean Archbishop Johanoun Lahdo. The reception took place at the St. Afrem Cathedral in Södertälje, while the guests subsequently met in Archbishop Benjamin's office, joined by parish council members of the local church, during which Archbishop Benjamin offered Metropolitan Cleopas a bishop's medallion as a gift and warmly addressed his guests.

Metropolitan Cleopas thanked Archbishop Benjamin for his gift and hospitality, and afterwards, they all sat down for a dinner at a local restaurant which was offered by Archbishop Benjamin in honor of his guests.

On Monday morning, May 27, 2024, Metropolitans Cleopas and Athenagoras saw off Metropolitan Agathangelos and his entourage from the hotel in which they were staying, as they prepared for their return flight to Athens later that day, expressing their respect, gratitude, and love for this worthy hierarch of the Church of Greece and able Director of the Apostoliki Diakonia for his many years of multifaceted support for the missionary work of the Holy Metropolis of Sweden.

On Wednesday afternoon, May 29, Metropolitan Cleopas accompanied Metropolitan Athenagoras to the airport ahead of the latter's flight bound for Constantinople later that day.

Photo credit: Messrs. Nikolaos Kitsios, Konstantinos Paschalidis, and Alexandros Symeonidis.

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